7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the beginning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered. However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of landholding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviving clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photographs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

[28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland, *Antiquity*, Vol. 4, 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Castle, on the mainland, and tried there; having been convicted, he was put to death, the means of execution being to chain him on a rock, which is left bare at low water, so that when the tide rose again he was drowned. This rock has ever since borne the name of Carrig Guairim or Gorham's rock. The belief is that ever since a curse has rested on the families connected with the murder, and that, in consequence, no Halligan can ever become a priest; and that several who have tried have all failed from one cause or another.

Cromwell's (or Bosco's) Castle.—There are many stories related about the old castle on Port Island, at the entrance to the harbour. Tradition says that it was built by a pirate named Bosco, about whose nationality there seems to be much uncertainty: one account making him a Spaniard, another a Dane. He was an ally of Grania Uaile, who had a fort a little farther up along the opposite side of the harbour, and for whom he kept a fleet of boats. He had a chain boom stretched across the harbour's mouth, from his castle to a place known in Irish as the Cat's Hole, close to the castle of the Guairim mentioned in the last tale, and to the site of the present R. C. Church, and thus prevented ships from entering or leaving the place without paying heavy dues to him. An embrasure or doorway overhanging the sea is said to have been used by him as a means of disposing of his prisoners; and just outside the mouth of the harbour, and close under the walls of the castle, is a small rocky islet, called the Gun Rock, on which Bosco is said to have had a heavy gun planted to defend the entrance.

During the Commonwealth, the castle is said to have been at first used as a prison for priests and monks transported thither from the mainland, and afterwards to have been strengthened, provided with a small boat-harbour, and supplied with a garrison, for whom a market was opened in Middlequarter. A large treasure is reputed to be buried somewhere within the castle; and a story is told of a priest who at one time attempted to dig for it, but was ordered to desist by a voice which spoke to him in Irish out of the ground.

The Bell of Inishshark.—There once was a marvellous brass bell in Inishshark, which was preserved with the greatest care, as it had at one time belonged to St. Leo, the patron saint of the island, about which the following legend is related. A French ship came to the island, the crew of which plundered the place, and took away the bell; but their theft did not prosper with them, for they had not well got it on board before very rough weather came on, and the vessel

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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423 621 of different sizes and various origins into which rural Ireland is divided—townland, parish, barony, diocese, rural district and so on—it is the townland which most closely touches the daily life and social relations of the countryman. The townland is his postal address, for individual farms preserve their historic communal anonymity: they still belong to the townland though they have become separated units since the 'town' or cluster has broken up. The farms rarely carry any names other than those of [103] their owner (Mulligan's place, Thomson's farm or merely O'Brien's) and since there may be a dozen O'Briens in a [551] particular townland various nicknames[1] and patronymics are used to distinguish between them. Thus one farm may be Kilty O'Brien's (from its left-handed owner), another Patsy Kate O'Brien's (from the owner's mother), and a third Yank O'Brien's (a returned emigrant, this). Similarly, the public house takes its title not from the brewers who supply it or from heraldic beasts such as the Red Lion but from the Mooneys or the Murnaghans who own it. Shops in country towns, too, [602] carry personal names, and the nucleus of their trade is built up among blood relations.

423 621 103 The townland names, involving so many land holdings, are legal titles, and their Gaelic names, however erroneously spelt on the Ordnance Survey maps, are fossilized in their current forms. Only an Act of Parliament can alter them. A glance at any six-inch Ordnance map will reveal the strange names that Gaelic imagination contrived and English scribes corrupted. Here are a few which I have come across in Ulster: Ballywillwill, Ballymunterhiggin, Aghayeevoge, Treantaghmucklagh. In all Ireland there are no less than 5,000 townlands beginning with 'Bally', forty-five of them named Ballybeg (little town). Some 2,000 townlands begin with Knock (a hill); there are sixty called Tully and there are eleven Edens. The degree of repetition shows that these names have come down from a time when life was organized on a local basis. There are between 60,000 and 70,000 townlands in Ireland, averaging 325 acres or 423 621 184 ½ sq. mile, and the average townland population in the rural areas is perhaps fifty. In fact their size varies considerably,

[1]Writing in 1682 (*West-Meath*, 113), Sir Henry Piers noticed their prevalence in that county '. . . so as no man whatever can escape a nickname.'

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Plate XI.

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ANCIENT PARISHES OF COUNTY CLARE.

To face p. 180.

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since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions."

I. *Place Names and Legends of Places.*

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.[3] Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poulnabruckee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.[4]

Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition[5]; while a third great independent line, the Corca-

[3] Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

[4] This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamaras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

[5] An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

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103 173 baiscinn, occupied the Baronies known down to Tudor times (and still as a rural deanery) as Corcavaskin,—now Moyarta and Clonderalaw, with the Barony of Ibrickan, (which takes its name from a settlement of fugitives from the Norman conquest in Leinster about 1180).

Burren.—Irghus or Eerish, a Firbolg in the oldest of Clare legends,[6] is commemorated by Caherdoonerish stone fort,[7] on Black Head. Finn MacCumhail gives his name to Seefin, on the same hills. The "silver bells" of Kilmoon church are said to be recalled by Cahercloggaun fort and Owenacluggan brook near Lisdoonvarna. In Kilcorney Parish we have two forts, Lisananima and Caherlisananima, named from ghosts; the first name is older than 1652. Beara, another Firbolg, brother of Irghus, gives his name, (found in a poem dating before 1014), to Finnavarra Point, —but not to Kinvarra, which is akin to Kenmare and Kinsale, "Head of the Sea" or "of the brine." The name Bohernamish, or "way of the dishes," with its legend of the miraculous rapine of King Guaire's Easter banquet, about A.D. 630, is found in the mediæval Life of St. Colman MacDuach.[8]

Corcomroe.—The reef of Kilstiffin, Kilstapheen, or Kilstuitheen has a legend of a sunken church and city, of which the golden domes appear once in seven years. The submerged forests and bogs inside the reef in Liscannor Bay, and the record of the great

Armada on the coast, heard by me down to 1878, have been since confirmed by the publication of long-forgotten letters. So historical tradition, even under the unfavourable conditions of recent centuries, has kept wonderfully accurate versions of events. The continuity of the schools and families of the hereditary bards and *ollamhs* favoured still greater accuracy in early times. Ireland had "books and philosophers" in the fourth century, according to Ethicus of Istria (*Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 403), and, possibly for the same period before Christianity as the Armada lies behind our own time, history was handed down truly, at least in its broad outlines.

[6] "Legend of Carn chonaill," "Dindsenchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), pp. 478-80.

[7] "Fort" in this paper means one of the entrenched residences, (usually circular,) of the early inhabitants. These are called in Irish *rath*, *lis*, and *dun*; the dry stone equivalent is *caher*.

[8] *Mish* also means an altar in early works. Cf. *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, (ed. W. Stokes).

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earthquake and tidal wave that split into three Inis Fitæ[9] on the same coast (A.D. 799-802), incline one to believe in a basis for the legend. In Nonghaval is a fort called Liskeentha, from "fairy songs" heard there. Not far away, in Kilfenora Parish, we have a Boughil or "petrified boy," and in Carran Parish a Farbreag or "petrified man"; such names, originating in strangely-shaped rocks, are rather common. A third Firbolg brother, Daelach, gives his name to the little river Daelach and the townland Ballydeely. In Carran and Kilmanaheen the belief in the *phooka* or *púca*, a demon horse or goat, is stamped on the Poulaphucas, one of which has a fine dolmen; such monuments all over Ireland are found connected with the malignant prototype of Puck. Lisfarbegna-gommaun, "the fort of the little men (playing at) hurling," commemorates fairy sports.

Ibrickan.—Poulaphuca in Kilfarboy is, so far as I know, the only mythic name, but Doolough Lake (Nigricantis) is named in the early "Life of Senan"[10] as the prison of the fearful "Cata" of Iniscatha, while the "Legend of the sons of Thorailbh mac Stairn"[11] locates the cavern whence the ferocious "Faracat" launched itself on the heroes' spears, beside its waters. Dunbeg Bay is the scene of a curious merman story.[12]

Moyarta.—At Loop Head, the south-western extremity of the county, we find a Poulnapeiste and a line of forts,—Cahercrochain, Cahersaul, Dundahlin, and Cahernaheanmna,—connected with the monster killed by Dermod O'Duine and the brothers Crochaun, Sal, and Dahlin, whose sister ("the one (lone) woman") gave her title to the last fort.[13] Iniscatha commemorates its dragon, and Lisnarinka fort the "dances" of its fairy dwellers.

Clonderlaw.—Turning inland, up the Shannon and Fergus

[9] Now Inniscaerugh or Mutton Island, Illaunwattle, Inismatall, or Mattle Island, and Carrickaneelwar. The first two are named Iniskereth and Inismatall in a charter of 1216.

[10] Colgan, *op. cit.* (March 8).

[11] A romance of about 1750, by Michael Comyn.

[12] Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, 1825, vol. ii., p. 31, (The Soul Cages).

[13] "Adventures of the sons of Thorailbh"; see also *Ordnance Survey Letters*, Co. Clare, Killballyowen Parish, (MS., R.I. Academy).

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103 173 confluence, Tobersheefra ("elf's well") and Poulaphuca are named from the fairies and *púca*, and Clondegad from two druids who competed in magic, making "two gads" (or withes) to sail up the stream.

Inchiquin.—Passing on to the settlements of the Dalcassians, we find treasure legends at Cloghanairgid ("rock of the silver (money)") and Skeaghvickencrowe ("MacEnchroe's bush"). Cloghaphuca in Kilnaboy and Poulnabruckee in Rath, with Toberatasha ("spectre's well," perhaps recording an apparition akin to that of Avenel), represent various supernatural beings. Seefin, Caherussheen, and Tirmicbrain near Corofin commemorate Finn, his son Oisin, and his dog Bran. The old pre-Norman Fenian tale of *Feis tighe chonain* is located on the high ridge over Inchiquin Lake, and connects Finn with the district and with a "hunting lodge" at Formoyle, but the first name ("seat of Finn") has been lost since 1839.[14] In the weird terraced hills of bare crag behind Kilnaboy legend meets us at every turn. Slievenaglasha, the Glasgeivnagh Hill, Mohernaglasha, Leabanaglasha, and Mohernagartan, "Smith's Fort," commemorate the Irish Vulcan, Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha), and the wonderful "glaucous cow," the *Glas*, whose hoof prints mark the rocks in every direction. Inchiquin Lake has a beautiful swan-maiden tale,[15] but it "names no name." Still in Kilnaboy we find, near the tall brown peel tower of Ballyportry, a Cloughaphuca and the enchanted Lake of Shandangan.[16] Ruan Parish has Cahernanoorane, taking its name from "fairy melody." Lisheenvicknaheeha ("the little fort of the son of the night") seems ghostly, but the constituent is also an ancient personal name, Macnahaidche, in use down to at least 1084. In Dysert, Crush'banola and the basin stone near it are connected with a

[14] *I.e.* lost so far as I know. Many names supposed to be lost prove, however, still to exist, especially amongst old persons, but should never be asked for directly, as the demand usually creates the supply. This precaution is too little heeded by enquirers in Ireland.

[15] Given by Dr. George U. MacNamara in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxi., p. 312.

[16] Its curious and unusual changes of colour give it the reputation of enchantment.

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curious legend which I reserve. Banola or Manawla is really the historic Tola, living about A.D. 637. Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge may commemorate a ghostly "red dog," like the dogs of Cratloe and Ennistymon in this county, and the *Maelchu* of Kerry.

Islands.—This small district, although containing the "capital" of Thomond from about 1220, is of little note in names. Poulnaclug contains the hidden bells of Dromcliff Round Tower. Knocknabohilleen probably had a "Boughil" or "Farbreag" (see *Corcomroe supra*). Fairyhill Fort in Kilmaley, and Music Hill, are connected with the "good people." Knockananima near Clare Castle, though superficially a ghost name, is said to be *Cnoc* (or *Cnock an*) *na h iomdna* or "Hurling-field Hill."

Bunratty.—Taking the Upper and Lower Baronies together, both here and in Tulla, we find an oblique allusion to the fairies in Gortnamearacaun ("foxglove field"), called also "Thimbletown,"—the foxglove being the fairies' thimble. Caheraphuca has a fine dolmen and haunted fort. Knocknafearbreaga derives its name and legend from the "seven" (*recte* five) pillar stones, once the seven robbers who ill-treated St. Mochulla's tame bull. It is noteworthy that the life of St. Mochulleus, (sought for vainly by Colgan about 1637 and only recently found in Austria and published), gives the *seven* soldiers and the slaying of the tame bull that ran errands for the saint.[17] In the Lower Barony the fairies are connected with Lissnarinka ("fort of the dance") in Clonloghan, and perhaps Caherfirogue ("young man's fort," 1617), which is now forgotten. Moyeir, Moyross Parks, and Moyri are variants representing the ancient Magh Adhair, the settlement of another Firbolg chief and place of the inauguration of the kings of Thomond from at least A.D. 847 to Tudor times. Slieve suidhe an righ or Slieve oided an righ ("king's seat" or "king's death hill"), in Glennagross, was connected with a legend, probably historical, that King Criomthann died there in A.D. 377 poisoned by his sister, who drank before him to disarm his suspicion and secure the kingship for her son.[18]

Tulla.—In the mass of hills near the Shannon, Carrickeevul, Tobereevul, and Glennagalliach ("hag's glen") commemorate

[17] *Analecta Bollandiana*, xvii., p. 135.
[18] S. H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii.

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banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a "Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another "seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshees.*

Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

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birds, the whisper and rustle of the wind on the grass and heather, and those weird sounds, booming and sobbing out of nowhere, which are supposed to arise from underground streams and caverns.

V. *Will-o-the-wisps and Corpse-lights.*

103 821 The will-o-the-wisp, if not unknown, is at least extremely rare. The name Loughaunaguinnell, or Loughaguinnell, of a pool in Doora refers, I was told, to a "candle" floating over its surface. In the name Doora itself we find the ancient word for water, which occurs as the river Dour in Kerry in Ptolemy's Atlas in the first century. Mr. and Mrs. Hall, in *Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc.* (1841), note that one of their guides told them of "corpse candles" seen on the banks of the Shannon, and voices of the "good people" heard with them. Crofton Croker, in "Florry Cantillon's Funeral,"[1] alludes to the "Blue Man's Lake at midnight," a lonely place in the bog at Shragh, near Kilrush, where "a spectral figure enveloped in a bluish flame" haunted the melancholy waters. Some of the "corpse lights" shining in graveyards, "forts," and deserted buildings I have myself seen. In one case, I traced the light to the stagnant water, full of rotten leaves, in the fosse of a "fort," which, when stirred by waving branches, gave out phosphorescent light. In another case a church gable was observed for many nights lit up with blue flame, after three victims of a railway accident had been laid in their family vault below it. The windows of Inchiquin Castle are seen across the lake, lit up by pale blue fire, which vanishes from the sight of anyone approaching the ruined building though still visible at a distance. A deserted cottage on a ridge not far from Tulla, as I have seen, used to be lit up with pale light, and was reputed haunted. Several graveyards have displayed "corpse lights," and particularly those at Killone Convent (a picturesque twelfth-century ruin on a wooded slope over a beautiful lake near Ennis), and, I hear, Killeemur and Kilmaleery on the Shannon and Fergus, and Clooney in Bunratty Barony.

[1] *Fairy Legends of the South of Ireland*, Part II. (1828), p. 24.

[p.202]

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VI. *Underground Folk.*

To underground folk, other than fairies, I have only found few and uninteresting references, such as,—"an old woman looked out of the side of the fort, and the man ran away"; "he heard *them* talking inside the hill"; and "the little old man came out of the fort, and shut it behind him." 776

VII. *Water Spirits and Mer-folk.*

The Shannon, according to the *Dindsenchas*, derived its name from a sea-lady, but evidently not a "water-breather." Sinenn, daughter of Lodan, came from *Tir-tairngire*, the Land of Youth, under the sea, to visit the well of Connla, under the river now called Shannon. She came to Linn na feile, but was drowned at Tarrchinn "on this side Shannon," and gave her name to the great river.[3] A water spirit, or mermaid, is remembered at Killone Lake and Newhall. The legend is preserved in several variants. In 1839 it was told how O'Brien of Killone saw a lovely girl in the lake, and caught her. Bringing her home, he found to his great disgust and disappointment that she had a fish's tail. He ordered her to be kept in a "crib," and fed and well-treated. As she never spoke, a local fool threw scalding water on her to make her say something. He was only too successful, for, after a wild, blood-curdling shriek, she cried: 103 ● 773 776

> "As the return of the salmon from the stream,
> A return without blood or flesh,
> May such be the departure of the O'Briens
> Like ears of wild corn from Killone."[4]

The legend recorded, almost at the same time (1840), by Crofton Croker was told to me by the old peasantry, about 1876, as follows:—A mermaid used to swim up a stream that flowed under the cellars of Newhall, in order to steal wine. The "master" (an O'Brien), or the butler, hid and stabbed her, (or threw her into a tub of scalding water where she became a big lump of jelly), and her blood ran down the stream and 773 776

[3] "The Dind Senchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), p. 456.
[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii., p. 111.

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773 776 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she wailed :—

> "As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
> So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

> "As the mermaid goes on the sea,
> A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
> So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
> Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer. [823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of long, low, cross vaults. [342] In the end of the innermost recess is a built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their [103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.[8] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

[8] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 ("The Soul Cages").

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XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date, for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

Cattle.—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St. Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolipduff (black), Boulynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolyneaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Boolydoolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacaunk (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

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114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

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[1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

[2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numerous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *curach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

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size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

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The Village and the Family

Village Differences

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103 LOW VILLAGE RECEIVES ITS NAME from its position on the lowest terrace of Inis Beag (see Fig. 4). It borders the ocean and strand, while High Village to the east is located in a wide expanse south of the common land formed by a concavity in the upper terraces. On the western of the two promontories high above the beach, separated from Low and Terrace by rift valleys, is Castle Village. Below it are the cemetery enclosing the church of the patron saint and the new school, and above it are the castle, the ruined monastery, the Napoleonic watch tower, and what remains of the old school next to the tower. The Ordnance Survey [133] [823] Maps place the highest elevation of Inis Beag in the vicinity of the tower, but the folk claim that the most elevated portion of the crest is above High. Terrace Village, on the promontory to the east, presents a breath-taking view of the lake (see Fig. 7), the sound, and towering mountains and cliffs along the mainland coast. Low merges with High, but Castle and Terrace, because they are located on high terraces and bounded by rift valleys, are isolated units. Terrace is aligned north and south, but the other three settlements are aligned roughly east and west. The southernmost house of Terrace and the westernmost one of Low are approximately 1500 yards apart, and the intervening distance can be walked comfortably in less than 12 minutes.

Below are the number of inhabited houses and the population of each village:

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	Houses	*Population*
Low Village	24	119
High Village	16	59
Castle Village	17	99
Terrace Village	14	73